

Khalifa Ali bin Abu Talib - Qais Bin Saad Ansari

Intrigues of Muawiyah

The plan of Muawiyah was that with Yazid b Harith, and Miasmal b Mukhalled he would create trouble for the government of Egypt. By making a treaty of neutrality with these people, Qais denied Muawiyah the possibility of having a foothold in Egypt. Thereupon he tried to cultivate Qais. Muawiyah asked Qais to join him, and in lieu thereof he promised him and his posterity the governorship of Egypt in perpetuity. Qais spurned this offer and declared that he was loyal to Ali and could not betray him at any cost. Muawiyah changed his tactics, and tried to make Qais believe that in supporting Ali he was supporting the murderers of Othman. Qais repudiated this view. He said that he was in Madina when Othman was assassinated and it was incorrect that Ali had supported the rebels or was involved in any way with the murder of Othman.

Having failed to win over Qais to his side, Muawiyah resorted to intrigue to create suspicion between Ali and Qais. Muawiyah whipped up propaganda to the effect that Qais was his ally, and would betray Ali at the proper time for such revolt. In proof of his claim for the friendship of Qais he asserted that Qais had not suppressed the party of the Egyptians who demanded vengeance for the blood of Othman and had not taken the oath of allegiance to Ali.

The agents of Muawiyah carried the propaganda to Kufa, and when Ali came to know of these persistent rumors he began to harbor doubts about the loyalty of Qais. Muhammad b Jafar and Muhammad b Abu Bakr the step sons of Ali pressed on Ali to put Qais to test. The two young men argued prima facie that there appeared to be truth in the rumors, for Qais had in fact not taken any action against the people who had not taken the oath of allegiance to Ali, but had on the other hand tried to conciliate them. In order to test the loyalty of Qais, Ali directed Qais to take into custody the chiefs of the tribes who had not taken the oath of allegiance to Ali and who stood for vengeance for the blood of Othman.

Qais wrote back to say that it would be inexpedient to arrest the chiefs of the people. They had entered into a treaty of neutrality with him, and they were abiding by the treaty. The treaty stipulated that as long as they were not pressed to take the oath of allegiance to Ali they would not raise the cry for the vengeance for the blood of Othman. He observed that he had established law and order in the province with some difficulty, and if the chiefs were arrested that would create unrest and law and order situation. The government of Egypt would in that case be accused of breach of faith and that would provide an opportunity to Muawiyah to interfere in the affairs of Egypt. He pointed out that being the man on the spot he knew what course of action was in the interests of the Caliphate. He pointed out that he had framed his policies in the best interests of the Caliphate and any change therein at that stage would adversely affect the interests of the Caliphate. He advised Ali to review his order and not to press for any action against the people who had not taken the oath of allegiance to Ali, but were otherwise not creating any trouble for the administration. Qais added that if Ali did not agree with him it was open to him to depose him and appoint another Governor.

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